

## Influenza Activity in Kansas as of December 23, 2003

The latest flu report from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for the week ending December 20, 2003 classifies flu activity in the state as "Widespread." The classification is based on reports of influenza-like illness in at least half of the state's 6 public health regions and recent laboratory confirmed influenza. 36 states are also reporting widespread flu activity, 11 states and New York City are reporting "Regional" activity.

Laboratory tests have confirmed that primarily influenza type A N3H2 viruses are circulating in Kansas this season; strain information from CDC is pending. CDC has stated during a 12/15/2003 conference call that 71% to 82% of the influenza A isolates are of the Fujian. strain. Two presentation of influenza type B has also been confirmed by a rapid test in the Southeastern part of the state.

This season's vaccine was formulated to protect against type A/Panama, type A/New Caledonia and type B/Hong Kong and is expected to offer some protection against the A/Fujian strain.

KDHE strongly recommends flu shots for all high-risk individuals and everyone should be reminded to practice good respiratory etiquette i.e.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze and throw the used tissue in the waste basket
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into the crook of your elbow
- After sneezing/coughing, always wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items.

If you have any questions about influenza activity in Kansas or wish to become a sentinel site for surveillance, please contact Daniel Neises (785) 296-5585 or Kathleen Waters (785) 296-0028.